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# Free abortion on demand for ALL genders!

By Ted Kelly

*The writer (she/her) is a transgender lesbian in Philadelphia.*

The Texas abortion ban — which went into effect Sept. 1 with U.S. Supreme Court approval — was a declaration of war against everyone oppressed on the basis of their gender.

But if we’re going to fight this war and win it, we need to be clear on who our allies are — and who they aren’t.

Dr. Alan Braid, an obstetrician in San Antonio, Texas, has distinguished himself as the first health care worker to announce he has already violated the state’s anti-abortion law. According to Braid, he “saw three teenagers die from illegal abortions,” prior to the 1973 Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court ruling that legalized access to abortion under certain conditions.

Now, nearly 50 years since Braid began his practice, he said, “I acted because I had a duty of care to this patient, as I do for all patients, and because she has a fundamental right to receive this care.” (tinyurl.com/4tk7sxs2)

Braid must know that by making this announcement, he is risking not only his career but his life. There has been organized, deadly anti-abortion violence for decades since Roe, including bombings and mass shootings in health care clinics

ONLY PARENTS  
CAN DECIDE WHAT  
IS RIGHT FOR  
THEIR FAMILY



UNLESS THAT  
PARENT IS  
SOMEONE WHO  
CAN BECOME  
PREGNANT



and multiple assassinations of abortion providers. Braid has been brave; hopefully, his action indicates more health care workers will throw down in support of abortion rights, too.

**Why is abortion access still in danger?**

Why was the Texas legislature allowed to make this attack now? Why does abortion access in this country hinge on a half-century-old court ruling? The specter of “overturning” Roe vs. Wade has been held over the heads of voters for as long as I have been alive. Why hasn’t the right to safe, legal abortion been codified

by legislation?

To grasp why abortion rights have been kept in this precarious legal territory, two concepts are key: class and the state.

The world we live in is divided into two classes. Your class is a matter of concrete material reality, not moral judgment. If you’re reading this, it’s more than likely that you are in the working class. You don’t own a factory or a bank; you don’t have a million-dollar investment portfolio or intellectual-property patents. You may be a warehouse worker, an office worker, a delivery or transportation worker or a sex worker. You might be unemployed or

incarcerated. But if you have to have a job in order to survive, you’re a worker.

The bosses and the bankers and the billionaires, on the other hand, have an entirely different relationship to society. The capitalists survive by never paying us workers the full value of what we’re owed. With this stolen wealth and the power structure of the state, they decide where resources get allocated and what work gets done.

But they don’t do it in a way that would create a healthy, beautiful and fair society. The capitalists only care about what will bring them the biggest return on their “investments.” It’s plain to see by looking at the world around you, what are the most profitable industries for capitalism: war, fossil fuel extraction, moneylending and speculation.

The capitalist state is a structure based on centuries-old notions of free markets and great men striding onto battlefields to make history, of violent white European chauvinism and unwavering misogyny. The United States originated in the assumption that women and all Black people are chattels, to be owned and controlled and exploited like livestock, and that Indigenous people had no rights to their lands, societies and even their lives.

This founding racist assumption is inextricably linked to the struggle for

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TEAR DOWN THE WALLS

#ShutDownFayette  
Curbfest for political prisoners  
Free Palestinian heroes  
Boston: No new prisons, jails  
Inhumane opioid withdrawal



New York City, Sept. 21.

WW PHOTO: TONI ARENSTEIN

Outrage at the border 11



# Fight for reproductive justice Support Workers World

Demonstrations will take place Oct. 2 in every state and Washington, D.C., to defend access to legal abortions, now under fierce right-wing attack. Ninety organizations have joined the call to mobilize to defend this basic right before the Supreme Court’s term begins Oct. 4, when it will be challenged. Their determined message to the Court and the states is: “We won’t tolerate this attack on our reproductive rights!”

Workers World supports these actions and the activists who are waging the struggle to maintain legal abortions, while fighting back against the racism and misogyny inherent in the anti-abortion “movement,” and their government allies. This bigotry is illuminated in restrictive laws and state repression directed against people who are low-income, Black, Latinx, Indigenous and im/migrants.

WW newspaper has covered every aspect of this struggle since the early 1970s. Our volunteer staff members have been active participants in it and have written firsthand reports and analysis.

A hard-fought struggle countrywide pressured the Supreme Court of the United States to legalize abortion in the landmark Roe v. Wade ruling in 1973. Since then, reactionaries have created obstacles for people seeking to end unintended pregnancies. They have made inroads in many states and are bolder than ever. Their ultimate goal: the overturn of Roe and national prohibition of abortions.

As of Sept. 1, the state of Texas began enforcing the most restrictive law since 1973. It denies abortion access for the vast majority of those seeking the procedure. Senate Bill 8 allows abortions only in the earliest stage of pregnancy, with no exceptions for pregnancies resulting from rape or incest.

SB 8 allows anyone to sue, for \$10,000, those who “aid or abet” individuals in obtaining an “illegal abortion.” The state is encouraging “bounty hunters” to pursue the helpers of desperate pregnant people. Its intentions are to intimidate them, terrorize abortion seekers and shutter clinics.

Five Supreme Court justices, showing their partisanship, allowed Texas to enforce this law, violating its own Roe decision, and trampling on individuals’ human



rights, personal autonomy and the right to make medical decisions.

### Your donations matter!

Workers World depends on your help. The WW Supporter Program was founded 44 years ago to help build this revolutionary socialist paper. Since the early 1990s, the fund has supported the workers.org website, where WW articles are posted daily and the PDF file of the weekly issue is displayed. The newspaper is now being printed and mailed out once a month.

For annual donations of \$60, \$120 or \$300, or more, members receive a year’s subscription, letters about timely issues and one, two or three free subscriptions, respectively, to give to friends. Supporters can receive the book, “What road to socialism?” (Notify us.) Or read it for free at workers.org/books.

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Thank you for supporting Workers World.



Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth

## Join us in the fight for socialism!

and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

### If you are interested in joining Workers World Party contact: 212.627.2994

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Vol. 63, No. 38 • Sept. 23, 2021  
Closing date: September 22, 2021

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published monthly by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$36; institutions: \$50. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl. New York, N.Y. 10011.



# Women gymnasts expose FBI complicity in abuse scandal

By Monica Moorehead

The nightmare that began with U.S. women gymnasts, both prominent and unknown, being sexually molested as young girls by USA Gymnastics former national team doctor, Larry Nassar, did not end with his 60-year prison sentence in 2018. The horror was once again conjured up in the most excruciatingly painful manner Sept. 15 at a Senate Judiciary Committee meeting in Washington, D.C.

Four U.S. gymnasts, Olympic gold medalists Simone Biles, Aly Raisman and McKayla Maroney along with National College Athletic Association champion Maggie Nichols, provided heart-wrenching testimony exposing the failure of the FBI, as well as USA Gymnastics and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, to take seriously their proven allegations against Nassar. Nassar also worked at Michigan State University, which showed similar indifference during the period the gymnasts were abused.

The harshest criticism by the four gymnasts was saved for the FBI, whose agents were asked to investigate the allegations against Nassar but never questioned him, even after he was arrested by state officials. One of the agents assigned to the investigation even tried to get a job with USAG.

Biles remarked to the Committee: “I don’t want another young gymnast, Olympic athlete or any individual to experience the horror that I and hundreds of others have endured — before, during and continuing to this day in the wake of the Larry Nassar abuse. To be clear, I blame Larry Nassar, and I also blame an entire system that enabled and perpetrated his abuse. We have been failed, and we deserve answers.”

Speaking in graphic terms of Nassar’s sexual assault on her in 2015, Maroney stated, “I told the FBI all of this, and they chose to falsify my report and to not only minimize my abuse but silence me yet again. It took them 14 months to report anything, when Larry Nassar — in my

opinion — should have been in jail that day.” (Washington Post, Sept. 15)

Maroney went on to say, “They made entirely false claims about what I said. They chose to lie about what I said and protect a serial child molester, rather than protect not only me but countless others.” She stated that talking openly on what happened to her and others has helped to offset post traumatic stress disorder.

Raisman said, “The FBI made me feel like my abuse didn’t count. I’m still navigating how I feel from this. I don’t think people realize how much this affects us. ... I’m often wondering, am I ever going to feel better? ... I’m so sick from the trauma.” (Wall Street Journal, Sept. 15)

Nichols, the gymnast who opened up the investigation against Nassar, said, “I want you to know that this did not happen to Gymnast 2 or Athlete A: It happened to me.”



Left to right: Aly Raisman, Simone Biles, McKayla Maroney and Maggie Nichols testify Sept. 15.

All four of these gymnasts, who represent at least 120 others, have asked that these FBI agents be indicted on criminal charges by the Justice Department and not just be fired. Only one FBI agent has been fired for mishandling the Nassar case.

### System steeped in misogyny

The FBI, as part of the repressive state apparatus, does not exist to protect the interests of workers and oppressed people, including the bodies of girls and women, against misogyny and sexual predators like Nassar, Harvey Weinstein and other men who wield wealth and power.

Women athletes, especially young ones, are the most exploited and under the most unbelievable pressure to perform to win, at the risk of developing eating disorders, physical injuries and mental stress. Remember how Simone Biles withdrew from several competitions during the recent Tokyo Olympics for her mental health, some of it related to the Nassar trauma.

This is the same FBI that carried out the terrorist Counter Intelligence Program, Cointelpro, during the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, that infiltrated and decimated national liberation movements inside the U.S. Cointelpro targeted the Black Panther Party, the American Indian Movement and others, resulting in the jailing of many political prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal, Sundiata Acoli and Leonard Peltier.

One cannot expect the FBI to punish its own with any real charges or jail time, despite any apologies made to the gymnasts. It would truly take a mass struggle to win any kind of justice.

Right now, one can only applaud the inspiring bravery of Simone Biles, Aly Raisman, Maggie Nichols and McKayla Maroney for exposing the government abusers that attempted to protect Nassar — and indirectly exposing the capitalist system that perpetuates such horrific sexual violence. □

## Women’s soccer players want Equal play, Equal pay

By Martha Grevatt

Discrimination on the basis of sex has been illegal since the 1964 Civil Rights Act was passed.

Yet somehow, in the world of sports, pay equity is almost nonexistent. Women’s National Basketball Association athletes make a fraction of what NBA male players are paid.

While the income gap has narrowed substantially in tennis, with major Grand Slam tournaments such as Wimbledon and the U.S. Open paying winners equal prize money, other major tennis events still perpetuate inequality. It took decades of pressure from star players like Venus Williams and Billie Jean King to reduce the disparities.

A federal judge ruled earlier this year against women soccer players who sued the United States Soccer Federation in 2016 over disparities between players on men’s and women’s teams, only upholding the claim for equal working conditions. While the five players who sued — Alex Morgan, Hope Solo,

Carli Lloyd, Megan Rapinoe and Becky Sauerbrunn — argued that the prize money was substantially lower for the women’s team, the judge dismissed the case because the plaintiffs had earned more money than male players.

However, they only earned more because they had won more games; if both teams had won the same number of matches, the men’s team would have been paid substantially more. Team Captain Rapinoe — an outspoken progressive on many issues including Black Lives Matter — blasted the ruling, which the plaintiffs have appealed.

Now, in what the U.S. National Women’s Soccer Team Players Association initially tweeted was a “PR stunt,” the USSF stated that it “firmly believes that the best path forward for all involved, and for the future of the sport in the United States, is a single pay structure for both senior national teams.” The organization claims its latest contract offer to both the U.S. National Soccer Team Players Association — the union representing the men’s team — and

the USNWSTPA establishes equal pay. (NPR, Sept. 15)

However, the USSF went on to state it will not agree to any collective bargaining agreement unless the issue of World Cup prize money is “sorted out.” Currently the international federation FIFA, which sponsors the World Cup, pays the winning men’s team over seven times what it pays the women’s team.

Morgan explained that, “we need to look line-by-line at what they’re actually providing, because if you have equal but it’s not even what we got before, or to the value that we are, then we still consider that to be not good enough.” (ESPN, Sept. 16)

Capitalists, including team owners, have always fought demands for equal pay. They make extra profit paying women and gender-oppressed workers — along with workers of color, LGBTQ2S+ workers and workers with disabilities — much less. But they are willing to cut the wages of higher paid white men and then hypocritically brag about their bogus commitment to equality. □

## Is ‘Tax the Rich’ the solution?

By Arjae Red

U.S. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) was the center of a large social media debate when she appeared at this year’s Met Gala event wearing a dress with “Tax the Rich” boldly embroidered on the back. The fundraising event is attended by many wealthy individuals and celebrities.

Much of the debate placed Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez herself under the microscope, dissecting her personal motives and scrutinizing her background. Largely missing from the debate — the most important aspect — was the slogan itself: “Tax the Rich.” To examine this slogan, we need a systemic understanding of the exploitation working-class people face under capitalism.

### Class nature of the problem

Wealth inequality is one of the most obvious contradictions of the capitalist system. Beyond the amount of wealth people have, there is the even deeper contradiction that

allows the huge income gap between the rich and the poor to exist in the first place.

Out of all the contradictions within capitalism, the primary contradiction shaping our experience is that contradiction of property ownership — between those who own and those who do not. The capitalist class owns the means of production — the property central to wealth creation. They therefore claim the “right” to all the products the workers they employ produce. The rest of us, the working class, own nothing that we can use to produce but our own labor power.

Some workers may own a house or even a car. However we do not own the land, tools, factories and other means to create our own products, and we are forced to work for those who do, for a rate much less than the amount of value we actually produce. The capitalist class keeps all the wealth accumulated for themselves, reinvesting some back into the production cycle. They kick down scraps for the workers, just enough for us to survive and

return to work day-after-day.

Workers produce all the wealth in society only to have it expropriated by the bosses. This is barefaced exploitation, yet without it capitalism could not exist.

**Raising taxes insufficient for change**

The phrase “Tax the Rich” is a relatively progressive slogan, especially to raise in the midst of those wealthy event-goers who paid roughly \$30,000 per Met Gala ticket. The slogan highlights the corrupt nature of the capitalist system, under which the rich pay a disproportionately small amount of taxes (if any at all) compared to working-class people. But it stops there and falls short of explaining the true root of the problem.

It does not raise questions about the existence of private property itself, nor the fact that working-class and oppressed people have neither any ownership or control over any of the wealth they produce in society, nor the ability to exercise any control over their workplace.

Private property relations are not changed when the tax rate on the rich is raised. When higher taxes on the rich have been implemented, the slogan reveals itself as insufficient, because simply raising the rate of taxation on the rich does nothing to address this power dynamic between the ruling capitalist class and the exploited working class, who are deprived of the ownership of the means of production. When made to pay higher taxes, the capitalists can pass on the expense by lowering workers’ wages or raising consumer prices.

The only way for workers and oppressed people to change our relationship to the means of production, to empower ourselves in a meaningful way — is to organize for socialist revolution and overturn private property relations.

If we are to demand the rich pay their “fair share,” that means taking back their wealth and private property and returning it to the workers who collectively produced it. □



# Nabisco strikers force company concessions

By Lyn Neeley  
Portland, Ore.

September 19 — Striking Nabisco workers at six locations across the country voted “yes” to the latest contract offer by the owners, Mondelēz International. However, the overwhelming sentiment expressed by strikers in Portland was a resounding “No!”

Mike Burlingham, vice president of Portland’s Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union Local 364 told this reporter, “Their contract is the first step in dividing workers.” The new contract will allow “Monster-*lez*” to deny overtime pay to workers on regular 12-hour shifts, working three days in a row on weekends. These less desirable shifts will punish newer workers and could sow division between junior and senior workers.

Every worker at Portland’s Nabisco plant walked out Aug. 10 — 200 BCTGM bakers and those on other union jobs, including Teamsters union members, engineers and electricians. Solidarity for the 24/7 picket line grew throughout the strike to include Portland city commissioners, celebrities and workers from dozens of unions.

The huge show of unity helped force the company to



WW PHOTO: LYN NEELEY  
**Workers World Party members at Nabisco strike support rally, Portland, Sept. 18.**

concede some benefits: no change in their health plan, a pay raise and an increase in disability benefits. But Portland strikers urged Nabisco workers in all locations to reject the contract.

Sharon, who worked at the company for 53 years said at a Sept. 18 rally, “the company is so sneaky and dirty, trying to pull things off behind our back.”

Mondelēz tried to give some workers bonuses directly instead of bargaining with the union. Sharon explained that workers at the plant “have always been a team that took pride in our work. The company is destroying that feeling of comradeship. Every time you divide people, you make us weaker.”

### Solidarity, local and global

Portland’s professional women’s soccer team, the Thorns, joined the Nabisco picket line Sept. 14. “We’re out here because you guys are fighting a lot of the same battles we are,” said player Emily Menges. She was referring to the U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team’s current fight for salaries equal to the Men’s National Soccer Team. She added, “When professional athletes and factory workers at a bakery in North Portland can find common cause, I gotta tell you, we’re gonna win this thing.” ([tinyurl.com/f7jjy2ys](https://tinyurl.com/f7jjy2ys))

“Those ladies are kick ass,” said Burlingham. “They marched the length of Columbia [3 blocks] and stood

their ground, while the vans and buses were trying to bring in scabs and baking supplies into the plant.”

Community action forced Mondelēz to drop a restraining order against the union for preventing scabs and supplies from entering the Nabisco plant. Company attorneys had to admit that the actions were performed by outside supporters and not by union members.

Jesse Dreyer, a Portland Teamster, filed a federal lawsuit for assault and battery on Sept. 14 against Huffmaster, a strikebreaking company hired by Mondelēz. Dreyer said a Huffmaster guard punched him in the head while he was picketing. A video of the incident shows Dreyer being pushed against a van for several minutes by the Huffmaster guard.

Shad Clark, BCTGM Western Region Vice President, told this reporter that “Mondelēz has been exploiting Nabisco workers here at the expense of their workers in Peru, Argentina, Egypt, Venezuela. Workers at Mondelēz plants in Australia have currently gone out on strike; and five years ago, Irish workers walked out of a Mondelēz plant in Ireland.” He said, “Mexican Nabisco workers make less than \$1.00 an hour, but in some countries conditions are worse.”

Clark said Venezuela, Argentina and Australia Nabisco workers sent messages of solidarity to U.S. strikers. Portland strikers say they support Mexican workers and want them to also have better working conditions.

A speaker at a rally Sept. 18 said, “Mondelēz is international, but so is the working class.” □

## Alabama Hauling support for striking coal miners

By Minnie Bruce Pratt  
Centreville, Ala.

Sept. 15 — Here in Central Alabama, the courageous strike by 1,100 Brookwood coal miners — United Mine Workers Locals 2245, 2397, 2368 and 2427 — continues into its sixth month. The workers are holding out against mega-company Warrior Met, backed by financial behemoth BlackRock. In February that global firm ranked second in the world in coal holdings, with investments valued at more than \$84 billion.

The miners are hanging on with strike pay, second jobs and help from spouses and families. UMW Auxiliary Locals 2368 and 2245, headed by president Haeden Wright, have delivered significant support by organizing a Strike Pantry for food, clothes and school supplies.

As a member of the National Writers Union, home for a visit to my county where many of the striking miners live, I wanted to show support for my union siblings. So I headed



WW PHOTO: MINNIE BRUCE PRATT  
**Brookwood, Ala., Sept. 15.**

out to help transport supplies to the pantry.

To pick up the food, I met miner Braxton W., auxiliary members Sherry and Leslie and children at Grace Klein Community/Feed BHM on Old Rocky Ridge Road in Birmingham. Tons of donated food flow through that distribution center to the 14% of Alabama’s people who face hunger — including the striking miners.

We packed flats of bread, canned peas and peaches, boxes of dried raisins and cranberries, snack bars, cake mixes, frozen pizzas and much more into two pickup trucks and an SUV. Then, driving 30 miles through pouring rain past paper-mill pine plantations, we delivered our supplies to the Local 2368 meeting hall in Brookwood, passing by yard after yard with signs “On STRIKE! No contract, no coal!” “United we stand with UMW members” and “We are One.”

Later that day under clearing skies, the miners gathered at their weekly rally at Tannehill State Park, where UMW District 20 Field Director Larry Spencer spoke of the inadequacy of recent Warrior Met contract offers. UMW International President Cecil Roberts, who also

spoke to the rally, commented earlier: “What Warrior Met has offered is just a tiny fraction of what workers gave up five years ago. These workers are tired of being mistreated; they are tired of being forced to work and missing time with their families. Warrior Met knows it is exploiting these workers, and it’s time for it to stop.” ([umwa.org](https://umwa.org))

The miners made major concessions in wages and benefits in 2016, when the coal company was in financial crisis, with the understanding the cuts would be restored in five years, which has not happened. When the company offered an insulting contract this spring, the miners struck April 1. Since then Warrior Met has stonewalled negotiations, brought in scabs and used state and local police to threaten and arrest strikers and supporters. Those on the picket line have been menaced and hit in vehicular assaults.

But the strike has had an impact; the company admits that it had \$7 million in strike-related losses, and coal production fell by over 40% in the second quarter of 2021. ([tinyurl.com/3v6xx2m8](https://tinyurl.com/3v6xx2m8))

*The miners need your solidarity and support as they continue their long haul: Haeden Burleson @UMWAStrikePantry on Paypal.*



By Marie Kelly

### Salon workers walk out on Walmart

Workers at the Walmart SmartStyle Salon in Allegany, N.Y., forced management to shut the doors, when all of them quit en masse. They had reached their breaking point after struggling for nine months to get the bosses to listen to their concerns.

Staff member Dana Roth said the issue was not related to COVID or mask mandates, but to matters such as unrelieved heavy work loads. Roth thanked their clients and said that leaving was not an easy decision for any of the staff. A “Closed” sign on the salon door had the message “We Love Our People” and listed where the stylists found new jobs. (Popular Resistance, Sept. 16)

### Health care workers across the country

According to the Cornell Labor Action Tracker, there have been 52 strikes by health care workers across the U.S. since September 2020 and 106 labor actions since March 2020. Workers in eight of the strikes were fighting

for a first contract.

The other strikes stemmed from issues related to COVID protocols (33 strikes), safety (24 strikes) and staffing (24 strikes). Duration of the strikes ranged from one day to six months. The latter worker action is the ongoing heroic effort of the St. Vincent Hospital nurses in Massachusetts, who are battling for safe staffing for patients. ([striketracker.ilr.cornell.edu](https://striketracker.ilr.cornell.edu))

### Carpenter union members invoke founder’s legacy

In Washington state, 2,000 carpenters represented by the Northwest Carpenters Union went on strike Sept. 15, halting construction on multimillion-dollar building projects for tech industry giants Facebook, Microsoft and Google. The carpenters, most of whom live in the Seattle area, are demanding a \$15-an-hour wage increase over the next three years. The high cost of living in Seattle makes that a reasonable sum.

According to the MIT Living Wage calculator, a single adult with three children living in the Seattle area should make \$58.29 per hour. Compensation for parking is also a demand, considering most workers must drive and park at their job sites in downtown areas. Parking fees can range from \$20 to \$40 a day.

The carpenters have already rejected four tentative agreements from the Association of General Contractors bargaining team. Striking carpenter Jason Bartos has a message for union negotiators: “We can shut this whole



**Carpenters strike in Seattle, Sept. 15.**

city down, but leadership won’t let us [so as] to stay in the good graces of contractors. These guys [on the picket line] are who [the union] works for — not AGC. So you need to start listening to us.” (Labor Notes, Sept. 17)

Rank-and-file members opposing the contracts have organized using a Facebook group named for Peter J. McGuire, the socialist founder of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners. McGuire was convinced that reformist measures were futile. He urged workers to abolish the wage system and institute a universal system of cooperative production and distribution. Under his leadership, a national strike in 1890 resulted in 23,000 carpenters in 36 cities gaining the eight-hour day and 32,000 in 234 cities gaining a nine-hour day.

McGuire said of the struggle: “We must elevate the craft, protect its interests, advance wages, reduce the hours of labor, spread correct economic doctrines and cultivate a spirit of fraternity among the working people, regardless of creed, color, nationality or politics.” □



# No cop city!

## Battle for the Atlanta forest not over

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Atlanta

Let me tell you the story about how a small group of wealthy and powerful corporate leaders, known as the Atlanta Police Foundation, grabbed city-owned, heavily forested park land for a massive police urban-warfare training center.

Much of the wheeling and dealing occurred in secret with the proposal only made public June 7, when Atlanta City Council member Joyce Shepherd introduced the “Cop City” ordinance. It authorized a 50-year lease of 381 acres of previously designated green space at \$10 a year to the private Atlanta Police Foundation to build a \$90-million police training facility.

Neighboring communities of mostly Black and low-income residents on the southside of Atlanta were shocked and horrified to learn that there would be multiple gun ranges, areas for deploying explosive devices like tear gas, flash-bangs and other toxic weapons.

The plan included a helicopter port, a tactical driving course and a mock city, complete with apartment buildings, stores and a gas station where crowd control, surveillance and SWAT-style tactics would be perfected. Plus a burning tower where firefighters would train. In addition, classroom buildings, dorms and lots of concrete parking lots. The plan would require the cutting down of thousands of substantial trees, cutting down of the forest itself.

If some alert organizations and individuals had not been paying attention to the goings-on at Atlanta’s finance committee meetings, this theft of public land could have been accomplished easily. The Police Foundation leadership from Delta, Home Depot, Coca Cola and Cox Enterprises, owner of the Atlanta Journal Constitution, certainly never intended to engage the public.

Fortunately what happened was an explosion of organized resistance that started small — mostly by politically and environmentally conscious youth — but grew into a large, vocal opposition that forced repeated delays in a final Council vote. Every nearby neighborhood association, environmental and conservation groups, radical youth, left political organizations, legal experts and

community groups focused on prison conditions, voting, gentrification, education and youth services had a hand in mobilizing opposition.

City Council meetings are held virtually, so hours and hours of recorded public comments, upwards of 17 to 20 hours, heavily opposed to the “Cop City,” had to be played. Some of the small minority who supported the proposal lived in Buckhead, an extremely rich area on Atlanta’s northside. Their repeated reason for supporting “Cop City” was to stop the increase in violence and property crime in their neighborhood, even though the facility would not be operational for a few years.

**Potential of more repression, environmental disaster**

Some opponents raised the destruction and erasure of the remnants of the historic Old Atlanta Prison Farm, where for decades mostly Black incarcerated workers labored under brutal Jim Crow segregation conditions to produce food for others.

Others cited the potential devastating damage by heavy metals from exploded armaments to the air and water quality of Entrenchment Creek and the South River. Both waterways run through the area and are necessary to waterfowl and other wildlife.

Many disputed any notion that the militarized techniques wouldn’t be primarily used on people of color, particularly youth. It was not lost on DeKalb County residents that the land in question was in unincorporated DeKalb County, so they had no say about what Atlanta would do with it. In another glaring legal contradiction, the whole forest had been designated as a green space in perpetuity by a 2017 City Council ordinance.

In a heavily bankrolled public relations campaign, the



PHOTO: GLORIA TATUM

Atlanta protest at Coca-Cola museum, Sept. 3.

Police Foundation declared that the training facility was key to “making Atlanta safe” by raising the morale of police and making recruiting additional members easier. It downplayed all the training of military-style weaponry and counterinsurgency tactics by saying the academy would be named the “Institute of Social Justice.”

Like many cities, Atlanta saw large continuous demonstrations following the videoed murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police, in the summer of 2020, and again when police killed Rayshard Brooks in a southside neighborhood of Atlanta. Large numbers of protesters were arrested; tear gas and clubs were used to disperse marchers.

Efforts to redirect city funding from police budgets to mental health services, affordable housing or job training were defeated by the same Council members who a year later voted to support Cop City with an anticipated \$30-million portion to be paid out of tax dollars. Ignoring the overwhelming community opposition to the urban warfare training center, on Sept. 8 the Atlanta City Council voted 10 to 4 to approve the ordinance.

Many of the organization members who had canvassed door to door in the adjacent neighborhoods, held numerous demonstrations, organized public meetings, distributed thousands of leaflets and lawn signs and phonebanked were, of course, disappointed and angry but also determined that the fight is not over.

It is likely that lawsuits will be filed, and environmental studies remain to be done before construction can begin. Other direct actions are contemplated. Moreover, every City Council seat is up for election in November, as well as the mayor’s office. The Sept. 8 decision could be reversed if popular pressure can be maintained and expanded.

The story to STOP COP CITY is not over. The fight to abolish the racist enforcers of class rule is on. Will you join? □

## Philly rally for Ant Smith

By Marie Kelly  
Philadelphia

The Philadelphia community came out Sept. 19 to show support for beloved activist and educator, Anthony (“Ant”) Smith. Organized by the Ant Smith Defense Committee, the rally and fundraiser, under the banner “Free the Bul: A Jawn For Ant” (jawn is Philly slang for a person, place, or thing) was held in Malcolm X Park in West Philadelphia. Smith faces trumped-up federal charges stemming from the uprisings last summer, following the Minneapolis police murder of George Floyd. Smith’s arrest took place within days of the Philadelphia police murder of Walter Wallace Jr. in October 2020.

The rally included music and performances, food provided by Food Not Bombs Solidarity and vendors from the community selling T-shirts, jewelry and water ice. A crowd of over 100 people listened to speakers who included members of Ant’s family, fellow activists and his colleagues from the school where he is a teacher.

Several of his students wrote letters, which were read aloud to the crowd describing the positive impact he has had on their lives.

Go to @Freeantphl on twitter, facebook and instagram to show your support. □



Philadelphia, Sept. 19. WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

## WW COMMENTARY

### Taking back the work week

By Olujimi Alade

Okay, I admit it. I’ve been going through a bit of an existential crisis. I guess you could call it a “quarter-life crisis” and the angst that often comes along with it. This conflict waging inside of me has been both ongoing and fleeting for the most part. But in recent weeks the trepidations have not only persisted but increased.

I’ve been trying to figure out why these feelings have persisted. Many of you reading this will chalk it up to the natural angst that comes with increasing age and the physical changes and ailments that go along with it: getting chubby, losing hair, gaining wrinkles, losing your youthful vivacity. All those worries are well-founded, but I felt that there was something more that couldn’t be explained by good old Father Time, so I continued to wonder about this persistent, nagging feeling.

One Friday afternoon at 4:59 p.m., I stood idly by watching the clock, hoping and praying that it would hit 5:00. The moment the 5 and the two zeros showed up on the digital clock on my computer, a feeling of relief and euphoria washed over me. “I’m free!” I thought to myself. “I’m free at last.”

The celebration lasted for about half an hour, and then suddenly a feeling of dread washed over me, and a bitter dose of reality set in. At 9:00 a.m. on Monday, I was going to have to do this all over again: the superfluous meetings, the long complex spreadsheets, the incessant micromanaging, the short breaks, the harsh reprimands, and sometimes even the “homework” they give you after your shift is over. The freedom of weekends is brief and fleeting for me as a worker, and I will be forced to do the whole thing over again on Monday morning.

And that’s when it hit me. The monotony that my everyday life has become was the source of my anxiety.

That realization was equally motivating and exciting.

My understanding motivated me to grasp that this is not how anyone should live their life. Working our life away in order to make the 1% richer is not what the majority of us dreamed about as children.

So many of us had aspirations that involved making not only ourselves better, but the world better. However, due to the exploitative nature of capitalism, we are robbed of such ability to make a meaningful impact on the world.

Even as far as day-to-day lives, how many people have missed out on their child’s first steps, learning a new language, mastering a new recipe to cook for dinner or discovering their hidden talent for break dancing?

Capitalism and the long weeks we have to work prevent people from getting the most out of life.

This epiphany highlighted for me just how necessary a working-class revolution is. As bad as I think I have it, there are millions of workers not just in the U.S. but around the world working 50-, 60-, 70-hour weeks and often more, in the most horrific conditions.

The capitalists we are wage-slaving for are having brunches, sailing on yachts and traveling to outer space. All the while they are saying meaningless platitudes such as, “Well, we all have the same 24 hours” in order to give the 99% a false sense of hope and keep us complicit in our own exploitation.

In a way, these selfish capitalists are right. We do all have the same 24 hours, and it should be a right, not a privilege, to enjoy them to the fullest. Capitalism prevents the vast majority of the world’s population from getting the most out of our 24 hours.

It’s past time for us as workers to rectify that reality, so that we in the present and also future generations will not be stuck in an overworked rut. It is our right to enjoy all that life has to offer. □



# Shut down SCI Fayette!

By **Betsey Piette**  
**Philadelphia**

For decades the toxic water and environment at Pennsylvania’s SCI Fayette prison has poisoned and killed incarcerated people inside. A rally to raise awareness and to call for the shutdown of SCI Fayette was held Sept. 19 outside Philadelphia’s historic Eastern State Penitentiary, birthplace of the modern U.S. prison system.

The event, attended by around 50 people, was organized by the Human Rights Coalition PA. The rally raised the health impacts of toxic coal ash, as well as fracking wastes and the link between environmental justice and prison abolition. While coal mines have closed, fracking for natural gas has taken their place as a major environmental hazard.

Opened in 2003, SCI Fayette in LaBelle, Pa., was built on a Coal Refuse Deposit Area bordering a coal ash dump. It is situated amid a massive toxic waste dump with around “40 million tons of waste, two coal slurry ponds and millions of cubic yards of coal combustion waste,”

according to the Abolitionist Law Center, which began investigating the facility in 2013 after receiving reports of high rates of cancers and deaths among both inmates and guards.

Rally speakers described how incarcerated people in the facility and prison staff reported chronic sore throats; throat swelling; shortness of breath; headaches; dizziness; vision problems; stomach pain; sores; cysts; and tumors in their mouths, noses and throats and on their skin. Many were

diagnosed with thyroid cancer, as were residents of the nearby town of LaBelle.

In the 18 years since the prison opened, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections reacted to incarcerated people’s reports of cancer clusters by moving them to other state facilities to die.

Letters from people incarcerated at SCI Fayette read at the rally laid bare how the isolating conditions during the COVID-19 shutdown have made conditions worse. Other speakers described how prisoners



Philadelphia, Sept. 19.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

reported having to wash with contaminated water which left them feeling like their skin was on fire. Speakers included people formerly incarcerated at SCI Fayette.

Dana Lomax-Williams, with the Delaware County chapter of the Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration, denounced the conditions at SCI Fayette as death sentences. Saudia Durrant with the Abolitionist Law Center and the newly formed Philadelphia Jericho Movement urged activists to get involved with the struggle to shut Fayette down.

Teddie Kelly with Workers World Party described the historic collusion between the coal mine bosses, the prison system and the capitalist state. She noted that when white workers lost jobs after the mines closed, they frequently migrated to major cities like Philadelphia for work. Eventually employment in coal mines in rural areas was replaced by jobs in prisons. Later, many Black and Brown workers in major urban areas, who lost jobs due to globalization and the consequent offshoring of jobs, ended up incarcerated in these same rural prisons. □

## ‘Tear down the walls! Free them all!’

By **Ted Kelly**

*The following are excerpts from remarks made at a Sept. 19 “Shut Down Fayette” rally in front of Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, Pa.*

My great-great-grandfather, Michael Kelly, was born in Schuylkill County. His parents were from Ireland. He was the first in my family to be born in this country. By 1870, the Kellys were living in Mahanoy. When he was probably about 10 years old, Michael started working down in the coal mines, the same mines where his father died.

His father, John Kelly, was one of those radical mine workers, the Molly Maguires. The Mollies made demands for better pay, better working conditions. If the demands weren’t met, they fought for them by caving in the mine entrances — or by caving in the heads of mine owners. John Kelly was arrested in a mass roundup of Irish laborers, after a Catholic priest who sided with the mine bosses got beat up. The charges didn’t stick. Everyone arrested acted as each other’s alibis. So the story goes.

The mine bosses then teamed up with the Pinkerton Agency to infiltrate the Mollies and bust up labor organizing and solidarity. Sixteen Irish coal miners were accused, convicted and executed in just two years from 1877 to 1879, including Alexander Campbell, Yellow Jack Donohue, Black Jack Kehoe and Edward J. Kelly.

Michael’s son and grandson would later join the most notoriously violent white-supremacist gang around: the

Philadelphia Police Department.

The current landlords of the Eastern State Penitentiary turn a handsome profit every Halloween by turning this old concentration camp into a haunted house, inviting the public to gawk at torture chambers like a carnival sideshow.

Despite the money they rake in, they still charge family members \$75 to request information about the records they have rotting away in there.

Michael Kelly died in 1947, homeless, without a penny to his name. He was 78, a decade older and as poor as his father was when he died.

It’s been decades since that process of unearthing, since they first dug those mines. And once they hauled out as much coal as technologically possible, they sealed them back up. After that, workers stayed in the old coal towns or moved away like Michael Kelly. All of them were subjected to the same cruelties of capitalism regardless.

Immigrants and poor workers are still being locked underground in these places. Some are prisoners; some are guards. All of them are subjected to the same toxic air and putrid water.

### Imprisoned revolutionaries

If you’re Black, Latinx or Indigenous, chances are you wear the brown jumpsuit, because while this system wages war on all workers, it has special contempt for those ineligible for “whiteness.” If you are white, you’re probably in the gray uniform, because the 1994 crime bill authored by warden-in-chief Joe Biden was not so much about solving the problem of “crime,”

as much as about solving the problem of what to do with all these unemployed white folks in places like Schuylkill County.

The mines were closed; the chemical and textile factories were shut down. The crime bill was really just a jobs program for rural workers. Anti-Blackness, once again, was the price of a paying job.

You need to fill a prison with human beings, overwhelmingly Black and Brown.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is the one who taught me all this. He’s sitting in a cell right now at SCI Mahanoy. That’s where Mumia and thousands of other poor and oppressed workers are locked away from their families, locked up in those same tunnels, locked in with all the poisons and carcinogens.

One of those incarcerated people is Bryant Arroyo. What he did at SCI Mahanoy prompted Mumia to dub him the world’s first jailhouse environmentalist.

One day in 2005 Bryant found an Environmental Protection Administration notice on the bulletin board. It announced plans to break ground on a several hundred million dollar, coal-gasification plant. For hundreds of years the capitalist state spent its resources digging holes in the ground, until it killed the land and poisoned everyone who lived on it.

It’s the 21st century now, and how does the capitalist state spend its resources? Not for health care for the people it poisoned for generations. Not for food and housing. It develops new technology to dig up new poison from the old holes.

Bryant knew right away that this meant death. Not just for him and for those he was incarcerated with, but for the people

living in Schuylkill County, even for the guards and the guards’ families.

He organized. He got through to the local paper. He got hundreds of fellow incarcerated people to write in, to sign their names individually, because it’s illegal for multiple prisoners to sign their names on one piece of paper. That would be a petition. And prisoners in Pennsylvania are not allowed to sign petitions.

From behind bars, he rallied the community whose livelihood was predicated on keeping bodies behind those very bars. He showed them that they all have a common enemy.

The gasification plant was shut down. A couple of billionaires became very angry and lost a lot of money because of Bryant Arroyo, a Puerto Rican grandfather who has been locked up for 25 years and sentenced to life in prison for a crime he did not commit.

Revolutionaries mobilize the people to work for our common good and fight against our common enemy — capitalism. It’s white supremacy, imperialism.

The threats faced by working and oppressed people today are on a scale never seen before. We have suffered too many tragedies, buried too many ancestors. We don’t need any more martyrs.

What we need is soldiers! Soldiers like Bryant, soldiers like Mumia. Soldiers like Ant Smith, Chelsea Manning, Daniel Hale, [formerly imprisoned Standing Rock water protector and medic] Red Fawn Fallis and Jessica Reznicek.

Behind the walls of these prisons is a revolutionary people’s army that is millions strong. □

## Philly’s first Curbfest for political prisoners

By **Betsey Piette**  
**Philadelphia**

Philadelphia’s first Curbfest for Political Prisoners, held in the city’s Germantown neighborhood Sept. 18, featured local DJs, performers, artists, multiple information and vendor tables about political prisoners and organizations working for their release. Curbfest events are planned for other cities in the U.S.

The event coincided with the designation of 2021 as the “Year to Free Political Prisoners.” Eight separate named

stations set up in and around Tubman Park (formerly Vernon Park) included Black August, Jonathan Jackson, Delbert Africa, Sekou Kambui, Carl Hampton, Safiya Bukhari, Marilyn Buck and Nehanda Abiodun — all in reference to political prisoners who have given their lives for the struggle.

At tables throughout the event, people could pick up palm cards with information on several political prisoners including Mumia Abu-Jamal, Russell Maroon Shoatz, Sundiata Acoli, Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, Leonard Peltier,

Ruchell Cinque Magee and many more. A complete list and information on 28 political prisoners is available on [curbfest.com](http://curbfest.com) and via #Curbfest.

Young people were encouraged to visit the separate event sites to broaden their awareness of U.S. political prisoners — defined by Curbfest as “people jailed on charges related to their resistance to oppression and repression and targeted by the state for their political beliefs and/or actions. The contributions their resistance makes to revolution is the basis of their capture, regardless of the charges

brought under the invalid, racist laws of the government.”

Many U.S. political prisoners, having served decades imprisoned, and in some cases in solitary confinement, are experiencing serious health crises, leading activists to push for their compassionate release.

Today’s event was seen as part of a lead-up to the Oct. 22-25 International Tribunal in New York City for the Spirit of Mandela campaign to bring international attention to U.S. violations of the human rights of U.S.-held political prisoners. □



‘This is not the time to despair’

# Palestinian prisoners recaptured

By Susan Abulhawa

On Sept. 6, millions around the world celebrated as news spread that six Palestinian political prisoners had liberated themselves from Gilboa, a maximum security Israeli concentration camp in the West Bank. For 10 months, with nothing but spoons and their bare hands, Yaqoub Qadri, Mahmoud Abdullah al-Arida, Muhammad Qassem al-Arida, Zakariah Zubeidi, Ayham Kamamji and Munadil Infaat tunneled through to the surface and made their escape. While Kamamji and Infaat remain free and on the run, al-Arida, Qadri, al-Arida and Zubeidi have since been recaptured by Israeli occupation forces. Israeli soldiers assaulted Zakaria Zubeidi so severely that he is rumored, despite Israeli denials, to be in a hospital in critical condition. The following article first appeared on [www.aljazeera.com/](http://www.aljazeera.com/)

For four days, Palestinians inside Palestine and living in exile in the diaspora were euphoric. In an act of extraordinary creativity and determination, six brave Palestinian political prisoners tunneled their way out of an Israeli maximum-security prison.

It was presumed they did so with a spoon, as they would have had no other tools. Certainly, they had no heavy machinery typically necessary for such a feat. The tunnel openings were exceedingly narrow, leaving everyone baffled how six grown men were able to pass through them.

I was immediately reminded of these lines from a Mahmoud Darwish poem:

*The Earth is closing on us  
pushing us through the last passage  
and we tear off our limbs to pass through.*

Indeed, when two of them — Yaqoub Qadri and Mahmoud Abdullah al-Arida — were captured on the fifth day, images released of them showed they had shed a tremendous amount of weight, presumably to fit through the opening. It was life imitating art — they tore off parts of their bodies to make the passage to freedom.

The following day, Zakariah Zubeidi and Mohammad al-Arida were captured. Ayham Kamamji and Munadil Infaat remain free, fighting for their lives, holding out as long as they can.



ART BY CARLOS LATUFF

## The passage to freedom

Israeli police snapped photos of the men they shackled, distributing ones that showed the most anguish in their expressions. Someone promptly photo-shopped smiles on the faces of Yaqoub and Mahmoud, and the edited pictures went viral.

Many have criticized the alteration of those photos. They argue that we have to look squarely at their pain and defeat, as if we are too stupid to understand what this moment means for them.

I believe whoever altered the photo did our society a great service, and I hope he or she does the same for Zakaria and

Mohammad's photos. The Israeli authorities disseminated those painful photos for a reason.

They want to reflect the heavy weight of them onto all of our hearts and let defeat and depression set in, as it seems to be doing. They want our deflation to be as big or bigger than our initial celebration.

They want to erase from our minds the knowledge that six defenseless, emaciated men, with nothing but perhaps a spoon, shook the colonial Zionist project to its core. It terrifies them that we could collectively contemplate the depths of hope and determination that propelled those six heroes to accomplish what everyone assumed was impossible.

Because if we did truly ruminate on that primal impulse for freedom, on the boundless hope in the heart of every revolutionary and fighter, we might find our own individual and collective power.

We might begin to understand that nothing is impossible, and freedom is within our reach. We might begin to organize a collective system to protect the remaining two — Ayham and Munadil — to keep them free and alive and encourage more defiance and resistance.

We might rise up to rid ourselves of the treacherous and illegitimate regime of Mahmoud Abbas and install a revolutionary leadership, willing to protect its own people, instead of protecting those who occupy, rob and oppress Palestinians.

## The blow they dealt cannot be undealt

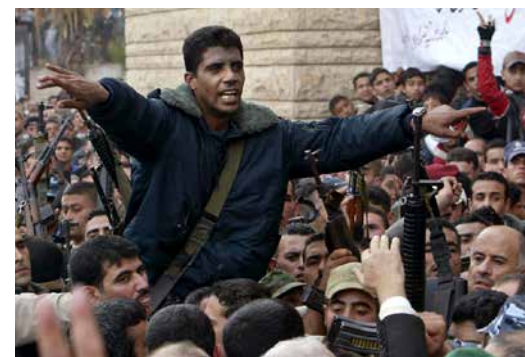
Our brave political prisoners knew the risks they were taking. This is what revolutionaries do. They would rather fight than capitulate. No matter what happens

now, what they did cannot be undone. The blow they dealt to “Israel” cannot be undealt. They sacrificed so much to give us all hope. How dare we now give in to depression and the sense of defeat?

It was not defeat or depression that motivated them to spend sleepless hours digging a massive tunnel without adequate tools. It certainly was not a belief in Israel's carefully cultivated perception of omnipotence.

The least we can do to honor them is to carry forth the torch of hope and the impulse for liberation that surely were at the heart of their heroism. We can solidify our defiance and refusal to live forever exiled or captive on our knees. We can understand that nothing is impossible, including ending this cruel Zionist regime. In the face of the horrors we know those heroic political prisoners are now facing, we have no right to depression or defeat at this hour. We can be certain that is not what they sought to inspire in us.

*Susan Abulhawa is a Palestinian writer and member of Workers World Party.*



Resistance fighter Zakariah Zubeidi, a ranking member of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, is feared to be in critical condition after Israeli soldiers assaulted him during his recapture.

After 90 miles

# ‘Long March for No New Prisons and Jails’ arrives in Boston

By mYia X and Phebe Eckfeldt  
Boston

Sept. 13 — Today, a 90-mile march, the “Long March for No New Prisons and Jails,” ended at the Massachusetts State House with 100 abolitionists and supporters rallying and holding a press conference. The marchers demanded a moratorium on construction of new prisons and jails in the state. They called on people to support two bills in the House and Senate (H1905 and S2030) which demand this. “Build up people, not prisons!” the ralliers said.

The march from Springfield, Mass., to the State House, Sept. 7-13, was organized by Families for Justice as Healing, the National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls (NCIFIW), Justice 4 Housing, Mass Peace Action and others.

Marchers passed by the Worcester County Jail, MCI Framingham (the state women's prison), where they held a rally, and the Suffolk County House of Correction, where a rally was held in honor of Ayesha Johnson. The 35-year-old Black mother died there in custody July 28. Johnson was in need of mental health support, but instead was taken to the prison where she was finally found alone and unresponsive in a holding cell. Her family and friends are demanding answers.

Families for Justice as Healing stated on their website: “We walk inspired by a vision of ending the incarceration of women and girls in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and shifting our state's focus from investment in imprisonment to investment in housing, education, health

care and jobs — all the elements that are required for a productive and satisfactory life. We walk to raise the alarm that Governor Charlie Baker is trying to build a new, \$50-million women's prison or invest as much in renovating and expanding the women's prison at Framingham, where currently less than 150 women are incarcerated.” ([tinyurl.com/bh8cazfk](http://tinyurl.com/bh8cazfk))

## Increased incarceration, oppression of women

At the rally which ended the march, speaker after speaker demanded a moratorium on prison building. “The state spends more on prisons than on health care and education combined,” said Andrea James, executive



WW PHOTO: PHEBE ECKFELDT

Prison abolitionists arrive at the Massachusetts State House after a 90-mile march against new prisons and jails in the state, Boston, Sept. 1.

director of NCIFIW. James, a formerly incarcerated woman, was a lead organizer for the event.

A November 2020 report from the Sentencing Project emphasizes the rising number of imprisoned women in the U.S.: “The female incarcerated population stands over seven times higher than in 1980. More than 60% of women in state prisons have a child under the age of 18; 1 in 50 children in the U.S. has a parent in prison.” ([tinyurl.com/8tt922jp](http://tinyurl.com/8tt922jp))

One speaker said that he had visited MCI Framingham several months ago, and due to the COVID pandemic, no programs were functioning there at all. Or rather, the only “program” underway was the sweatshop where the women were sewing American flags!

Leslie Credle, executive director of Justice 4 Housing, Inc., which finds housing for women leaving prison, spoke of having her baby taken away from her when she was incarcerated and the pain of being forced to parent from jail. She recounted how when her daughter was killed at age 22, she was not allowed to attend her funeral and was instead locked in solitary confinement. As a result, anxiety and panic attacks are part of her daily life now.

Another woman spoke of the deep, lifesaving support that the women incarcerated at MCI Framingham provided to her. “They raised me, fed me and made sure I went to educational programs.”

The struggle continues with more and more people taking to the streets demanding “Tear Down the Walls! Housing, daycare, education, health care for our communities, not incarceration!” □



# Untreated, opioid withdrawal can kill

By Princess Harmony

Opioid withdrawal is hell on the body and mind. You lose control over bodily functions, shake, shiver and struggle until it’s over. Because it can kill, you risk your life going through it.

At the Lebanon County Correctional Facility in Pennsylvania, Victoria “Tori” Herr died from dehydration due to opioid withdrawal in 2015. Prison officials failed to act, despite seeing she was struggling and unable to consume even liquids.

She needed hospitalization to get a much needed intravenous liquid drip and methadone (Methadose, Diskets) or buprenorphine (Suboxone, Subutex, Sublocade, Zubsolv) to carry her through withdrawal. Herr was refused access to the most basic form of addiction-treatment care.

To deny the necessity of methadone or buprenorphine in the treatment of both unincarcerated and incarcerated people is to deny that addiction is a serious condition, whether viewed as a disease or not. Withholding a basic human right — health care — is inhumane. For the incarcerated, it negates two more basic rights: the right to be free of cruel and unusual punishment and the right to equal accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Statistics show that methadone and buprenorphine — the gold standards for

Opioid Use Disorder (opioid addiction) treatment — when given to patients are highly successful at preventing relapse and overdose on other opioids. According to one study, “A Medical Treatment for Diacetylmorphine (Heroin) Addiction,” a combination of therapy and methadone treatment in 22 male patients monitored for 15 months showed marked improvement in quality of life.

The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews found that methadone is an effective medical intervention in the treatment of OUD. It reported it was more effective than treatment not including any medication for opioid addiction.

These arguments have been made in multiple court cases, winning the right to access treatment for OUD in some parts of the U.S. In Massachusetts, the American Civil Liberties Union successfully got plaintiff Geoffrey Pesce access to methadone during his stay in Middleton House of Corrections in Essex County. In the U.S. Penitentiary at Leavenworth, another incarcerated worker, represented by the American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas and Missouri, won the right to be given buprenorphine by the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

This year, a Watertown, N.Y., man identified as P.G. was arrested for a probation violation before Labor Day. He needed methadone to maintain his recovery from opioids and filed a lawsuit against Jefferson

County with the aid of the ACLU and the New York Civil Liberties Union. The sheriff, undersheriff and the jail administrator were all named in the lawsuit.

## Violation under Americans with Disabilities Act

On Sept. 7, District Court Judge David Hurd issued an emergency order giving P.G. his methadone, citing irreparable harm to his recovery should he be forced to stop taking it. Hurd went a step further and said that to remove him from his methadone would violate his rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

Hurd wrote: “The uncontested evidence established that withdrawal from methadone treatment is excruciatingly painful, will cause a number of severe physical and mental symptoms and will place plaintiffs at a significantly heightened risk of relapse and death.”

Another form of cruel and unusual punishment is the transition of methadone and buprenorphine-sustained patients to the drug naltrexone (Vivitrol). Although studies sponsored by the drug’s maker, Alkermes, found the medication successfully blocks the opioid receptors in the brain, keeping some patients free of opioids, the studies hid the fact that the psychological aspect of addiction keeps on burning. Preying on misinformation about what the two medications

do, Alkermes made methadone and buprenorphine-sustained patients look like illicit drug users.

In his request to get methadone, P.G. stated naltrexone did not work for him, yet naltrexone was all that was offered to him and other nonpregnant incarcerated workers. Naltrexone has some benefit for patients whose opioid use disorder is less severe and who have a high likelihood of abstinence. However, the American Medical Association’s Journal of Ethics stated that while naltrexone was more useful than nothing, it still was not as successful as opioid-agonist therapies. They found its widespread use in prisons and jails was the result of lobbying on the part of Alkermes, rather than any studies proving its effectiveness in comparison to methadone and buprenorphine.

Methadone and buprenorphine — opioid agonist MAT therapies — have been found to be successful in patients seeking recovery from opioids. To remove them from their medication-assisted treatment adds an extra layer of punishment to their prison or jail sentences and almost certainly condemns them to relapse and death. P.G. was able to get methadone, but in many cases imprisoned patients are not given that option.

We have to continue to lobby for methadone and buprenorphine therapies to be seen as legitimate to save the lives of the incarcerated. □

# Free abortion on demand for ALL genders!

*Continued from page 1*

guaranteed abortion rights. The capitalist state, founded on patriarchy and white supremacy, determines whether a person has the right and the means to prevent themselves from getting pregnant, to stop a pregnancy for any reason and to decide whether, when and how many times they get pregnant.

This struggle is a question of bodily autonomy. Does a person have the right and the means to decide what their body does and what is done to their body? The answer to that question is determined by your social class.

## Racism and abortion access

Capitalist ongoing obsession with controlling workers’ bodies does not manifest the same way for all workers. At the same time the state fomented “pro-life” anti-abortion fervor within white middle-class communities, it takes a very different line in the colonies and underdeveloped communities it oppresses.

In 1976, the U.S. government admitted it had ordered mass sterilizations of childbearing people in Puerto Rico as far back as 1930. Nearly 40% of all Puerto Rican women during this period were given “la operación,” as it was commonly referred to.

During the 20th century, white doctors across the U.S. South performed thousands of hysterectomies and sterilization procedures on Black women without their consent. The practice was so widespread that legendary Civil Rights organizer Fannie Lou Hamer, herself a victim of forced sterilization, coined the term “Mississippi appendectomy” to refer to the brutal practice.

The ugly racist “science” of eugenics and “population control” is still fundamental to the capitalist worldview. In 2019, Sen. Elizabeth Warren lamented the “realities [that] are bearing down on Israel, demographic realities,” referring

to the higher birthrate of Palestinian communities, and implying the existence of Palestinian children is a threat to the Israeli state.

Ruling-class rhetoric is more polished than the chants of the white supremacists who marched through Charlottesville, Va., in 2017. But both are motivated by paranoid fear of “white genocide” and “replacement” by people of color.

The vile racism of the anti-abortion movement means that the struggle to protect workers’ bodily autonomy must be anti-racist in nature. An abortion rights movement made up of only white women is simply not viable. It excludes too many people who share a common enemy.

## Pro abortion rights, pro trans rights

The racist anti-abortion movement is also violently transphobic. This, too, poses a challenge to an abortion-rights movement that tolerates so-called “gender-critical” Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists (TERFs).

I know that when I join the thousands and hopefully millions on Oct. 2 to protest the Texas ban, some of my sibling protesters will wish I had stayed home, because they think trans women don’t have a place in this movement.

And, yes, I am a woman who does not have a uterus, and I know that an attack on abortion rights is an attack on me, too. Any attempt to control what a woman’s body can or can’t do is also an attempt to define what is or isn’t a woman’s body.

There have been encouraging signs of wider understanding that people in a range of genders need access to abortion and that those traditionally seen as “women” are not the only ones threatened by abortion being outlawed.

The threat of forced pregnancy is a violent and distinguishing feature of gender oppression that targets everyone with a uterus, whether cis women, trans men, nonbinary or agender people.

But transphobia is festering among

some white middle-class elements of the feminist movement. The Guardian deleted portions of its Sept. 7 interview with eminent feminist theorist Judith Butler after a right-wing backlash from TERFs. Within the censored paragraphs, Butler had commented:

“The so-called gender critical writers [TERFs] have also rejected the important work in feminist philosophy of science showing how culture and nature interact ... in favor of a regressive and spurious form of biological essentialism. The anti-gender ideology is one of the dominant strains of fascism in our times. So the TERFs will not be part of the contemporary struggle against fascism, one that requires a coalition guided by struggles against racism.”

The movement for abortion access needs the collective effort of millions to oppose the current right-wing assault. The abortion-rights movement will fail to gather all necessary forces if its members do not understand that the bogus assertion of “biological gender” comes from the same playbook of eugenics and racist science.

## ‘If you go down and I’ve let that happen, they’re going to come for me too’

What’s the antidote to this poison pill? Solidarity, of the kind described by trans activist and leading Workers World Party member Leslie Feinberg, who said in 2008:

“Wherever people are struggling against a common oppressor, that’s where we gotta be. And I don’t mean like some quid pro quo like, ‘Well, I’ll support you, but first I have to ask you a few questions on where you stand on this and where



Austin, Texas, Sept. 11.

you stand on that.’ That’s not solidarity. That’s a business agreement.

“I mean the kind of solidarity that says, ‘When it’s your life that’s on the line, when you’re struggling, look to the left or look to the right and I’ll be there. I’ll be there, and I will fight for your rights. Because your life is as precious to me as my own.

“And I know that if you go down and I’ve let that happen, they’re going to come for me too. And shame on me for not having understood that.”

Texas lawmakers revealed what revolutionaries already knew: that the U.S. ruling class still adheres to its founding principles of white supremacy and patriarchy.

If we are going to win this battle, we need a broad and united front. Our marches, our clinic defense, our rallies can’t look like those “pink pussy hat” protests back in 2017.

Our campaign has to look a lot more like the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion in the streets — when cisgender men and women, gay and lesbian young people, sex workers, drag kings and queens, butches, sissies, trans and gender-nonconforming resisters of many nationalities rose up to defend their bodies and their rights. □



# A Marxist history of HIV/AIDS **Part 5**

## Mobilization wins against AIDS in New York City, 1981–1986

By Devin Cole

*HIV refers to human immunodeficiency virus. If left untreated, HIV can lead to the disease AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). HIV is transmitted by four fluids: semen, vaginal fluid, blood and breastmilk, and through mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy/birth.*

A chapter of People with AIDS (PWA), the group started in 1982 by gay activist Bobbi Campbell in San Francisco, was established in New York City that year by Michael Callen and Richard Berkowitz.

Most significantly for the East Coast, on Jan. 12, 1982, in Larry Kramer's apartment in New York City, a group of gay men founded the Gay Men's Health Crisis — later known as the Gay Men's Health Center (GMHC). Paul Popham, a Wall Street banker, was elected president of the organization. Popham's conservative views on fighting HIV/AIDS often clashed with Kramer's radical views. Later this would cause Kramer's ouster from GMHC and his refusal for over 30 years to work with the organization.

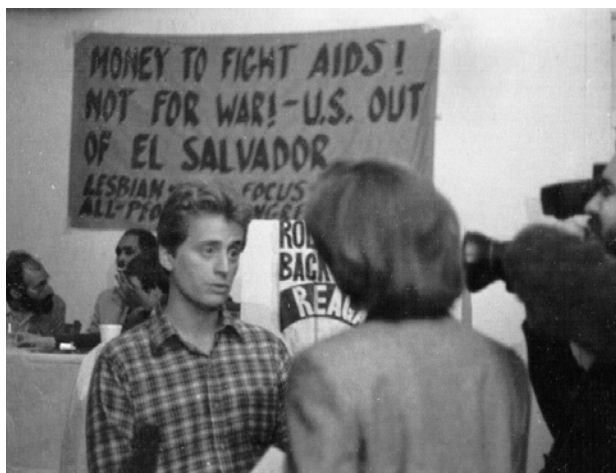
On March 14, 1982, Dr. Jim Curran, an epidemiologist, became one of the first U.S. medical professionals to speak out on the infectious nature of HIV. He spoke to a crowd of hundreds of doctors — many who were gay and lesbian — at the first-ever meeting of New York Physicians for Human Rights. Curran predicted that the physicians would spend the rest of their working lives fighting this mysterious illness. Despite growing concern, and despite the presence of LGBTQ+ physicians at the event, his words were hardly heeded, though ultimately turning out to be true.

GMHC quickly set up an AIDS Hotline for crisis counseling. It was started by GMHC member Rodger McFarlane using his own home phone. This was perhaps the first hotline of its kind, most certainly the first in New York City, and served to help spread information about the virus in its early days to thousands of New Yorkers, before much of anything was known.

This single phone line did more for raising awareness than any government entity at that point. In fact, the Reagan administration had still not uttered a single word on the epidemic!

Almost a year after Dr. Curran's watershed speech, the virus was still not being taken seriously. Larry Kramer published his own historic speech on AIDS in a March 27, 1983, editorial in the New York Native, "1,112 and Counting." Kramer lambasted the gay community for apathy towards this mysterious illness that was killing its members. He wrote: "In all the history of homosexuality, we have never been so close to death and extinction before. Many of us are dying or are dead already." ([bit.ly/3AAEdVi](https://bit.ly/3AAEdVi))

Kramer went on to correctly state that if the illness was affecting majority white, heterosexual, middle-class men and women, millions of dollars would have been poured into research. He cited the 1982 Tylenol scare in



WW PHOTO: RACHEL NASCA

After speaking on the HIV/AIDS crisis, Workers World Party comrade Leslie Feinberg (facing) talks to attendees at a 1983 Boston meeting of the Lesbian and Gay Focus of the All Peoples' Congress.

which \$10 million was provided by the U.S. government to research deaths ultimately shown to result from drug tampering.

From 1981 to 1987 at the beginning of the epidemic, 60% of AIDS cases were among white people in the U.S. ([tinyurl.com/2mzmvyx8](https://tinyurl.com/2mzmvyx8)) But because the illness affected mostly gay and bisexual men, people who injected drugs and eventually Black and Brown people, HIV/AIDS was not given the same attention and care as other less serious health crises.

Kramer criticized the lack of response from the city of New York, where Mayor Ed Koch skirted the issue of AIDS for the first two years it ravaged the city. Kramer also criticized bourgeois media such as the New York Times for their scant coverage.

To drive Kramer's points home, the New York Native then called for 3,000 volunteers to disrupt the city's traffic and engage in act after act of civil disobedience to force New York to pay attention to the epidemic that was hitting its inhabitants.

The city management of New York, terrified at the idea of 3,000 people participating in acts of civil disobedience, quickly formed the Office of Gay and Lesbian Health Concerns to address the epidemic. Despite this development, the Koch administration continued to drag its heels on making any major shifts in fighting HIV/AIDS in the city until 1985.

However, in 1984 more street activism and mobilization began to occur in New York City, not just against the mayor's apathy, but in protest of the entire U.S. government's refusal to deal with the epidemic.

In a July interview with this writer, Workers World Party San Antonio member Shelley Ettinger, who lived in New York City during the HIV/AIDS epidemic, commented on the intense street mobilizations that began in 1984. She recalled one large protest that year at New York City's federal building against then President Ronald Reagan and his administration.

These protests occurred during the 1984 presidential election, in which Reagan easily defeated Democratic Party nominee Walter Mondale. In a series of events that surprised absolutely no one who understood the bankrupt, anti-democracy machine that is the two-party system, neither the Republican Party nor the Democratic Party mentioned the AIDS epidemic in their press releases, campaigns or debates. When Reagan spoke at his victory celebration on election night, he said "The best days of America lie ahead."

By this time in the U.S., over 7,000 known people had AIDS, and there had been over 5,500 deaths. ([bit.ly/3xaaL6l](https://bit.ly/3xaaL6l))

In 1986, Gay Men of African Descent was founded in New York City and began to combat the AIDS epidemic in the Black gay male community. Even within the growing queer HIV/AIDS fightback movement, the crisis of AIDS within the Black community was largely being ignored due to anti-Black, racist attitudes within the white gay community. This would continue with gay Black men, Black women and especially Black trans women being disregarded in the struggle for HIV/AIDS treatment and fightback — a critical and catastrophic error that had consequences lasting into today.

### The masses force Reagan's hand

In 1985, four years after the New York Times had published its throwaway article on a "rare cancer seen in 41 homosexuals," and after thousands of people were suffering from AIDS with thousands dead — after years of LGBTQ+ people, people of color, people who inject drugs and poor people being blamed for the plague and after years of discrimination in housing and employment, xenophobia, racism, anti-Blackness and the phony "War on Drugs" — President Reagan finally spoke on HIV/AIDS. After demonstration on demonstration, after networks of solidarity held rallies, direct actions, vigils and civil disobedience, Reagan was finally forced to confront the epidemic he had not only intentionally ignored, but had mocked in private.

His first mention of AIDS was only to express his hesitance in allowing children with AIDS to attend public school. In fact, Reagan went so far as to bar his surgeon general, Dr. C. Everett Koop, from speaking publicly on the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

When Reagan finally relented in 1986, after more public pressure, he pressured Dr. Koop to keep any information released "in line with conservative policies." In other words, Reagan advocated continuing to ignore the oppressed communities affected by HIV/AIDS, providing as little funding as possible against the epidemic and drowning out the voices of millions of people demanding he take action.

Dr. Koop, however, took matters into his own hands and released information that actually called for comprehensive AIDS education and rejected mandatory testing. During the epidemic, this was the first instance of someone directly allied with the U.S. ruling class turning against its reactionary denial of the crisis and actually making a correct step.

Despite Reagan's complete mishandling of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which fueled all sorts of further discrimination against nationally oppressed groups, LGBTQ+ persons, people with disabilities and working-class people, the early years of activism — at first mostly vigils and pleas for help — were soon transformed into militant actions led by militant groups that called for complete disruption of "business as usual" policies of the capitalist-imperialist U.S.

These militant actions would go on to dominate the struggle against the HIV/AIDS epidemic during the late 1980s and early 1990s, as contradictions sharpened, conditions worsened, and anti-capitalist militancy grew.

*Ellen Catalinotto, who contributed to this article, worked for 22 years as a midwife in New York City hospitals, where she participated in research that led to the first breakthrough in preventing mother-to-child transmission of the AIDS virus. Devin Cole is a transgender Marxist organizer and writer. They are the president of Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative), a transgender advocacy organization in northwest Florida, and a member of the Workers World Party — Central Gulf Coast (Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi) branch.*

## New York City

## Taxi drivers demand debt forgiveness

The New York Taxi Workers Alliance organized a Sept. 19 rally and a 24/7 protest encampment for Debt Forgiveness at City Hall in Manhattan.

Thousands of drivers are locked in lifelong debt and are at risk of bankruptcy, of losing their homes, cabs and savings. The drivers are heavily in debt on loans to buy required NYC taxi medallions whose value collapsed, based on new regulations and new ride services such as Uber and Lyft.

Faced with a city-manufactured crisis that only benefited the banks, drivers with unpayable debt have committed suicide.

— Report and photo by Sara Flounders





# Stop U.S. submarine warfare!

The Biden administration’s latest foreign policy step has sharpened U.S. imperialism’s global conflict with the People’s Republic of China. It must be opposed by all those who want to reverse a new version of the 20th century’s Cold War and avert a global war.

Biden made this move official with his Sept. 15 announcement of a deal for the U.S.-British military-industrial complex to provide Australia with the means to build eight nuclear-powered submarines. These warships can operate underwater for months at a time and threaten Chinese interests throughout the Pacific and Indian oceans.

China’s position is clear. Speaking for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Zhao Lijian said the submarine agreement “has seriously undermined regional peace and stability, intensified the arms race and undermined international non-proliferation efforts.” (fmprc.gov.cn, Sept. 16)

The Biden administration has thus maneuvered the Australian government into challenging Beijing in the

region closest to China. It has done this even though capitalist Australia currently depends on China for much of its trade. Prior to this U.S. nuclear deal, the Australian regime had avoided steps that would lead to confrontations with Beijing.

In geostrategic terms, Washington has roped the Australian regime into the administration’s planned anti-China alliance, which includes Japan and India. This step, a follow-up to Obama’s “pivot to Asia,” exposes the U.S. aim to reverse the successes of the Chinese People’s Republic, in economic, political and military terms.

Republican and Democratic administrations share this approach, intended to serve the U.S. ruling class. This imperialist ruling class is made up of the U.S.-based billionaires in industry, commerce and banking, who are the tiny tenth of one percent of the population who gain from U.S. domination of the world.

It is these and only these parasites who benefit from the hegemony of the Pentagon, the U.S. dollar, the U.S.-based corporate media and Western technology

that allows them to exploit the resources and labor of the working people of the world — including workers inside the United States.

**Ominous new threat**

What demonstrates that Biden’s deal with Australia is a particularly serious threat to China is that, to make it, he was willing to injure relations with a traditional U.S. ally — French imperialism. France has colonies in the South Pacific and in the Indian Ocean and semicolonies throughout North and West Africa. Since 1999 the French military has joined the U.S. in military attacks on Yugoslavia, Libya, Afghanistan and throughout West Asia, despite conflicting interests in these regions.

In this latest case, the U.S. allied with Britain and pushed Australia to cancel a \$66-billion contract with French companies, which the Australian government had already signed off on. The contract was for building diesel-powered submarines to patrol the same waters but without the ability to stay underwater for

months, and thus less of a threat to China. Australia told the French government of its decision only hours before Biden’s announcement.

In response, the French government withdrew its ambassadors from the U.S. and Australia — the first time in over two centuries of U.S.-France diplomatic relations.

The conclusion of all this is that to grab a contract for its war industries and heighten the pressure on China, Washington is ready to stab its imperialist allies in the back. Whether these “allies” react with further submission to Washington or growing militarism is yet to be seen. Either reaction harms working-class interests in Europe and worldwide.

Most important for the working class in the U.S. is that Washington has now put competition with the Chinese People’s Republic on the front burner, and this antagonism could lead to war. This danger of war must be resisted by the U.S. population, especially its working class in all its diversity. □

## Challenging U.S. sanctions Iran, Syria send solidarity shipments to Lebanon

By Sara Flounders

A delivery of tankers of diesel fuel from Iran and Syria to sanctioned Lebanon is a historic breakthrough with both immediate practical assistance, political solidarity and a direct challenge to the U.S. siege of the entire region.

The shipments, which began arriving Sept. 16, were announced weeks in advance and brought thousands of tons of desperately needed fuel. The Iranian ships openly moved from the Red Sea through the Suez Canal and into the Mediterranean Sea to Syria’s port of Baniyas. From the Syrian port, just north of the border with Lebanon, convoys of tanker trucks drove through unofficial entry points into that country.

Videos of cheering crowds greeting lines of the huge trucks vibrated through the media of the entire region. The first fuel convoys were met with celebratory gunfire and people throwing rice and rose petals into their path, as they traveled through the northeastern village of al-Ain.

At least 80 trucks in four convoys arrived by Sept. 17 in Lebanon’s north Bekaa valley, Beirut and other coastal cities. Oil export monitor Tanker Trackers says that the four-tanker shipment contained a total of 33,000 metric tons of gasoline and that 792 tanker trucks would be needed to deliver the entire shipment to Lebanon.

“If the Lebanese government wants to buy fuel from us to resolve the problems faced by its population, we will supply it,” Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Saeed Khatibzadeh stated. (tinyurl.com/e78e2bhr)

The breaking of the siege and the deliveries organized by Hezbollah, the Lebanese Resistance Movement, are viewed as a huge victory for the resistance movement in



**Iranian oil tankers greeted in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley, Sept. 16.**

Lebanon. The successful shipment is seen as a potential challenge to the viability of U.S. sanctions by three countries — Iran, Lebanon and Syria — that are being driven by the sanctions to the brink of collapse.

**Hezbollah breaks the siege**

In a speech on the arrival of the first convoys, Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general and leader of Hezbollah, announced this had broken an “American siege.”

He added that a month’s supply of fuel would be distributed free of charge to government hospitals, nursing homes, orphanages, civil defense forces and the Lebanese Red Cross. The rest of the fuel will be sold “below cost” to bakeries, private hospitals and companies operating generators.

Hezbollah, a major political force in Lebanon, has long been part of the country’s governing system, with ministers and elected members of parliament.

Hezbollah fought to liberate Lebanon from Israeli military occupation in 2000 and has defended the country against several U.S.-backed Israeli attacks since. Its fighters have helped the elected government of President Bashar Hafez al-Assad of Syria withstand the U.S. effort to overturn and dismember that country.

When the U.S. put Hezbollah on its terrorism list in 1995, this initiated sanctions that have blocked every form of Lebanon’s government and business purchases, even of the most essential supplies, from other countries. U.S. sanctions are directly responsible for Lebanon’s economic collapse, that has left the country not only short of fuel but lacking in other basic necessities, such as medicine and even drinking water.

The country’s economic collapse, according to the World Bank, is one of the worst during modern times. The Lebanese currency has lost more than 90% of its value against the U.S. dollar since 2019, causing inflation to skyrocket and pushing three-quarters of the population into poverty. Electricity outages can now last as long as 23 hours a day, bringing essential industry and normal functioning to a standstill.

U.S. sanctions across the region, from Afghanistan through Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, block regional cooperation. The U.S. sanctions extend to all financial and banking transactions and to obtaining essential supplies or selling materials for export. All credits for trade and rebuilding aid in this region torn by U.S. wars are frozen by U.S. sanctions. These strangle almost every country in the region except Israel, which is always guaranteed billions of dollars in U.S. funding and political support.

U.S. ambassador to Lebanon, Dorothy Shea, has said the country does not need Iranian fuel. Instead the U.S. supposedly backs a plan to ease Lebanon’s energy crisis through Egyptian natural gas, piped via Jordan and Syria. At the same time, U.S. sanctions don’t allow transport through Syria.

The U.S. sanctions on Syria block all efforts at rebuilding that war-torn country — after 10 years of U.S. bombing, arming of mercenary forces and efforts to overturn the government. As for Iran, it was the U.S. that broke the treaty it had signed in 2015, with five other countries and with Iran, that had pledged to end U.S. sanctions on that country.

U.S. sanctions affect a third of humanity with more than 8,000 measures impacting 39 countries. (sanctionskill.org/resources-2/)

All efforts at breaking this U.S.-enforced policy of mass starvation and enforced underdevelopment must be supported. End all U.S. sanctions! □

## New York solidarity with Zimbabwe

On the eve of the opening of the United Nations’ General Assembly in New York City, the Brooklyn-based December 12th Movement organized a Pan-African support rally Sept. 18 with the theme: “Zimbabwe will never be a colony again.” Zimbabwe, formerly known as Rhodesia, won its independence in 1979 in a guerrilla struggle against its colonizer, England. Zimbabwe is one of 39 countries under sanctions by both the U.S. and England, because it dared to resist white, racist rule to win its sovereignty. Among the supporters of the rally, held at Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, were Workers Assembly Against Racism and Workers World Party.



— Report and photo by G. Dunkel



# Despite dire conditions U.S. deports Haitians

By G. Dunkel

An Aug. 14 earthquake completely devastated southwestern Haiti, the country’s breadbasket. At least 2,200 people were killed, and tens of thousands of homes destroyed, along with roads, bridges, schools, churches and crop fields. A few days later Tropical Depression Grace dropped 5 to 15 inches of rain on the area in 24 hours.

Because of the July assassination of Haiti’s president Jovenel Moïse and a general climate of unrest and destabilizing violence, there has been no effective centralized response to the earthquake and devastating weather.

This situation grew even more difficult when the current acting prime minister, Ariel Henry, was charged with complicity in the assassination.

The political and economic situation in Haiti is so dire that on Sept. 10, the Department of Homeland Security was forced to extend Temporary Protected Status for Haitians who resided in the U.S. prior to May 21.

### Haitians come to apply for asylum

Haitians from across Latin America looking for asylum in the U.S. have gathered

under the International Bridge at Del Rio, 150 miles west of San Antonio. This encampment began in August with a few hundred people, families and single adults.

As of Sept. 18, the gathering had 14,500 people according to an estimate by Rep. August Pfluger (R-Texas), who gave the figure to Yahoo News while at the scene. Pfluger noted there had been 12,000 people present Sept. 17, with hundreds arriving each hour.

Homeland Security has quickly deported 86 Haitians from this gathering of thousands of migrants and is planning to deport more on three to five flights to Port-au-Prince, Haiti’s capital, during the week of Sept. 19.

Many of the Haitian families at the U.S. border have complicated issues of nationality. Some have worked in Brazil or Chile for years after fleeing the catastrophic 2010 earthquake in Haiti and its aftermath. The children of these families, born in Brazil or Chile, are not Haitian citizens, and Haiti is not obliged to accept them.

This gathering of Haitians at the Mexican border is a protest, a demonstration revealing that the immigration policies of the Biden administration are just as racist and exclusionary as Trump’s. These policies may not be as crudely expressed



Humanitarian crisis for Haitian refugees on Mexico-Texas border.

or with as much overt racism, but they have much the same impact.

Nicole Phillips, legal director of the Haitian Bridge Alliance, a coalition of Haitian nonprofits, told the Associated Press Sept. 18: “It really is a humanitarian crisis. There needs to be a lot of help there now.” The Alliance advocates that the U.S. government allow these migrants to apply for asylum.

The U.S., Canadian, and French-language press have alleged, sometimes explicitly and sometimes not, that “some group” must be “behind” this protest by Haitians coming simultaneously from all over Latin America.

### Haitian people uniting in struggle

But historically, the Haitian people have known how to unite in struggle, from the uprising inspired by Dutty Boukman against the French enslavers in 1791 and

the subsequent successful war for liberation from enslavement, the struggles against the U.S. occupation from 1916 to 1934, the protests against Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier in 1986 that forced him from office, the massive protests against anti-Haitian U.S. AIDS policies in 1990 and more.

In this age of social media, Haitian workers in Latin America maintain contact with their relatives and friends both in Haiti, North America (particularly Montreal, Boston, New York and Miami) and France.

The U.S. Coast Guard has blocked access to the U.S. from Haiti by sea. A general agreement by the people on the easiest way of getting into the U.S. was over its border with Mexico. Del Rio has a bridge that offers access.

And so the people let each other know, and they came. □

# Latin America: 2021 has been a year of struggle

By Martha Grevatt

Mass demonstrations and strikes targeting unpopular governments and foreign business interests are taking place all over Latin America.

Throughout 2021 Argentinians have been in the streets, opposing everything from unemployment to fracking to the Zionist occupation of Palestine. A Sept. 4 march, in memory of those lost to COVID, protested the government’s policies related to the pandemic.

Right-wing Brazilian President Bolsonaro — in Trump-like fashion — has wildly exaggerated his popularity. He predicted as many as 2 million people would turn out to demonstrate support for him on Brazilian Independence Day Sept. 7. He even called on his backers to attack the Supreme Federal Court and the Chinese Embassy.

There were nowhere near 2 million Bolsonaroistas in the streets Sept. 7. On the contrary, “Cry of the Excluded” was the theme of anti-Bolsonaro demonstrations held in 64 cities. “There is no sign of recovery from unemployment of more than 14% of the country, to which is added a much larger number of people living on the edge in precarious situations,” Resumen Latinoamericano reported Sept. 9. “The social crisis only tends to worsen all the social indicators.”

### Actions in multiple countries Sept. 15

In Ecuador, demonstrations Sept. 15 continued the ongoing protests against



Workers strike in Uruguay.

President Guillermo Lasso. Demands included calls for a freeze on fuel prices and an end to privatization. The Unitary Workers Front, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador and the National Union of Educators were among the organizations protesting. The demonstration drew rice growers, milk producers, banana workers and taxi drivers.

That same day Salvadorans demonstrated against President Nayib Bukele’s legal maneuvers that would let him seek another term in the 2024 election — moves protesters say represent a consolidation of dictatorial powers. The action, uniting unions, students, Indigenous groups and members of the LGBT+ community, opposed Bukele’s decision to make the cryptocurrency bitcoin the

national currency along with the U.S. dollar.

A number of bitcoin ATMs have recently been vandalized or destroyed. Bitcoin, a mandatory currency for transactions between businesses with the technical capacity for it, is a magnet for capitalist speculators and gamblers due to its wild and rapid fluctuations in value.

A third Sept. 15 action was a general strike of Uruguayan workers called by the Inter-Union Plenary of Workers-National Convention of Workers (PIT-CNT). Issues included education, housing, food and land distribution to small farmers. The PIT-CNT invited a cross section of Uruguay’s population to converge on the

capital Montevideo. “The PIT-CNT and the entire popular camp are trying to raise their level of initiative and mobilization. The radical adjustment policy being applied by the government against the population’s rights and income will bring more protests,” stated PIT-CNT Secretary-General Marcelo Abdala. (TeleSUR English, Sept. 15)

The people’s movement in Honduras celebrated a victory the evening of Sept. 17, after learning that charges were dropped against Edwin Espinal and Raúl Álvarez who had faced 15-30 years in prison. They were arrested along with 180 others over bogus charges stemming from 2017 protests against massive electoral fraud that gave right-wing President Juan Orlando Hernández another term in office. Espinal and Álvarez had been jailed for 19 months under horrific conditions.

Other events this month included the commemorations of 200 years of Mexican independence Sept. 16 and the bloody CIA coup 48 years ago that overthrew socialist Chilean President Salvador Allende Sept. 11.

Each of these countries’ struggles are nails in the coffins of the Monroe Doctrine and President Theodore Roosevelt’s “Big Stick” policy in Latin America, whereby the U.S. ruling class claimed the whole Western Hemisphere for itself. To quote a popular Chilean song: “The people united will never be defeated.” □

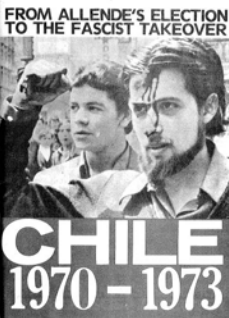


Workers in Argentina demand jobs, Sept. 16.

## Chile 1970–1973 From Allende's election to the fascist takeover

The articles from Workers World newspaper collected in this pamphlet cover the period from the election victory of the Popular Unity coalition led by Salvador Allende in 1970 to the first issue of the paper to come out after the fascist takeover of Sept., 11, 1973. Nearly all of the articles are polemical in nature, that is, besides reporting the events, they argue a viewpoint and a political approach to the events unfolding then in Chile that reflect the world outlook of Workers World Party.

Available as a free download at [workers.org/books](https://workers.org/books)







Luisiana después de Ida.

# Informe desde Nueva Orleans: El gobierno no hace nada por los pobres

Por John Catalinotto

1 de septiembre — Gavrielle Gemma, organizadora sindical y política desde la década de 1970 y que ahora trabaja con el Movimiento Socialista Voz Obrera, con sede en Nueva Orleans, llamó a Mundo Obrero para informar sobre la situación allí, después del huracán Ida. Gemma vive ahora en una modesta casa unifamiliar en el barrio de Florida de Nueva Orleans, que forma parte del Upper Ninth Ward.

“Está mal”, dice. “Sólo la gente pobre se quedó una vez que el alcalde y el gobernador aconsejaron que la gente evacuara. Eso significa que la gente que se quedó no tenía otra opción, ni lugar a donde ir, ni dinero para pagar hoteles o moteles, suponiendo que pudieran encontrar una habitación. Si hubieran hecho obligatoria la evacuación, entonces el gobierno sería responsable del bienestar de la gente que se fue. Pero no están haciendo nada.

“El mayor problema inmediato es que no hay electricidad. La compañía que la suministra -Entergy- dice que puede pasar un mes antes de que restablezcan el servicio completo. Y hace calor, calor,

calor, en los 90 grados con alta humedad. Para mantenerse vivo en este clima, se necesita agua y una forma de refrescarse. Los centros de refrigeración -para personas en peligro de agotamiento por el calor- no tenían comida ni agua.

“Mira, no esperamos milagros. No pueden detener un huracán. Pero aunque no muramos en la inundación, nos están dejando morir de hambre en las calles. Desde el primer día, alguien debería haber salido a la calle”, dijo Gemma, “para decirle a la gente qué esperar y qué hacer. Los camiones cisterna con agua y con alimentos podrían haber ido de calle en calle, trayendo alimentos listos para comer y agua para beber, y lonas para cubrir las fugas.

“Aquí estamos tres días después de la llegada del huracán a tierra, y el gobierno sólo ha habilitado tres lugares en la ciudad donde se puede ir a por agua. Luego, cuando llegas allí, tienes que hacer cola durante horas.

“No sólo no tenemos electricidad ni alimentos, sino que no hay gasolina disponible. Ya hay largas colas de gente esperando por gasolina y por hielo. Los únicos

que se las arreglan son los pocos que tienen generadores.

“El dinero para comprar un mísero bombardero F35 bastaría para llevar un generador a cada hogar de la ciudad”.

**Crisis agravadas: COVID, recortes, Ida**

“Esto dará a sus lectores una idea de cómo es el gobierno estatal aquí”, añadió Gemma. “El gobierno estatal rechazó el seguro de desempleo federal COVID-19 extra de \$300 dólares a la semana durante los dos últimos meses. Esto fue como robar \$2.400 dólares a personas que necesitaban mucho dinero. Y aquí no se pagan los días de enfermedad.

“El estado incluso está abandonando a los residentes de Nueva Orleans que tienen recursos suficientes para evacuar o familiares que los alojen. El mensaje del gobernador para ellos es: ‘No vuelvan. No podemos cuidar de ustedes’. Así que incluso cuando las tiendas vuelvan a abrir, mucha gente no tendrá dinero para comprar comida. Y para cada compra se necesita dinero en efectivo, no hay cupones de alimentos, ni SNAP (Programa de Asistencia Nutricional Suplementaria).

“Ya hay gente que está siendo desalojada de sus casas. Sólo empeorará después de Ida.

“Biden asumió la responsabilidad de salir de Afganistán: es bueno que Estados Unidos salga. Podría ordenar los esfuerzos federales para entregar la ayuda a Nueva Orleans. En California, se utilizan aviones gigantes en la lucha contra los incendios. Podría utilizar aviones de carga para entregar la ayuda aquí.

“Biden va a venir a ver Luisiana después de Ida. La gente de mi barrio está muy enfadada porque no se está haciendo nada para ayudar. Están dispuestos a protestar.

“A los demás problemas de Luisiana se suma el aumento de los casos de COVID-19. Atascar a la gente en un refugio para resolver un problema provocará otro. Es criminal cómo las autoridades estatales han manejado la pandemia aquí.

“Convertiremos estas palabras en acción. El Movimiento Socialista de la Voz de los Trabajadores se movilizará para luchar por las demandas para ayudar a la clase trabajadora de Nueva Orleans. Yo seré parte de eso”. □

## La tormenta antes de la tormenta

No hay duda de que la catástrofe climática amenaza el futuro de la vida en el planeta. Será necesaria una movilización masiva de la clase trabajadora para combatir esta amenaza.

Pero, como reveló el huracán Ida y las inundaciones asociadas, no se trata sólo de una amenaza para las generaciones futuras: el cambio climático ya es un asesino. No sólo se han ahogado decenas de personas tras el paso del huracán, sino que hay cientos de muertos por la ola de calor en el noroeste.

Los fallos estructurales del capitalismo están agravando la catástrofe climática para la clase trabajadora. Como admitió el New York Times el 3 de septiembre, “los desastres que se han producido en cascada en todo el país este verano han puesto de manifiesto una dura realidad: Estados Unidos no está preparado para el clima extremo que ahora se está haciendo frecuente como resultado del calentamiento del planeta”.

Vemos una clara falta de preparación en el país más rico del mundo. No se tiene en cuenta a los pobres, a los oprimidos y a la clase trabajadora, que no reciben ayuda para la evacuación en una situación de peligro para la vida y son básicamente abandonados a su suerte.

El proyecto de ley de infraestructuras de un billón de dólares aprobado por el

Congreso “incluye \$150.000 millones de dólares para energías limpias y protecciones contra el cambio climático. Decenas de miles de millones también se utilizarían para luchar contra las condiciones meteorológicas extremas como la sequía, los incendios forestales, las inundaciones y la erosión”. (PBS, 5 de agosto)

Decenas de miles de millones es lamentablemente insuficiente.

En el 16º aniversario del huracán Katrina, pensemos en la devastación de Luisiana y Mississippi, cuyos gobiernos aún no están totalmente preparados para otro gran acontecimiento meteorológico. Un millón de personas siguen sin electricidad y con poco gas y agua durante el peor calor del verano.

En los cinco distritos de Nueva York y en partes de Nueva Jersey y Pensilvania, la gente quedó atrapada, algunos muriendo en sótanos inundados, otros sin poder ir a trabajar o hacer tareas esenciales debido a carreteras y puentes colapsados, vehículos destrozados y metros y autopistas inundados.

La falta de dinero no es el problema. Hay una riqueza increíble concentrada en la ciudad de Nueva York y sus alrededores, pero los trabajadores que producen esa riqueza estaban indefensos ante la avalancha de agua. Si sólo las fortunas financieras de Wall St. fueran gravadas con la misma tasa

que un trabajador medio, los fondos podrían utilizarse para evitar muchas de estas trágicas muertes.

Manhattan es una isla de asfalto, con muy poco suelo expuesto para absorber las aguas de las inundaciones. La tierra fue robada a los pueblos indígenas y luego se construyó para servir a los intereses del capital financiero, al margen de las personas y el medio ambiente. Como en todos los grandes centros urbanos, el dinero del presupuesto municipal -necesario para reparar y mejorar las infraestructuras- se destina a los tenedores de bonos de la ciudad. Los grandes bancos de Wall Street extorsionan los abultados pagos de intereses de Nueva York y otras ciudades con problemas de liquidez.

**Es hora de ‘cambiar el sistema, no el clima’**

“El patrón de daños refleja la relación entre la exposición al clima y la desigualdad racial; los impactos fueron más evidentes en las comunidades de color con bajos ingresos, que, debido a las desigualdades históricas, son más propensas a las inundaciones, reciben menos mantenimiento de los servicios de la ciudad y con frecuencia experimentan una aplicación laxa de los códigos de vivienda”, reconoce el New York Times.

El terrorismo ambiental y el racismo ambiental en Estados Unidos forman parte del legado del desarrollo capitalista.

Y la situación es mucho peor en el Sur Global colonizado.

Pero la Cuba socialista, con muchos menos recursos que Estados Unidos, ha creado un modelo de evacuación de huracanes que vela por todos los seres humanos, e incluso por las mascotas y el ganado.



Las inundaciones devastaron la ciudad de Nueva York. Aquí, la estación de metro de Harlem.

Se moviliza a toda la población y no se deja a nadie a su suerte.

Es necesario un programa de reivindicaciones de la clase trabajadora para hacer frente a la doble crisis del calentamiento global y de las infraestructuras defectuosas o lamentablemente inadecuadas: Dinero para la protección contra las inundaciones y la ayuda, no para la guerra. Dinero para centros de refrigeración en una ola de calor, no para exenciones fiscales a los ricos. ¡Dinero para empleos pro medio ambiente, no para intereses a los bancos! Las personas y el planeta antes que los beneficios; ¡haz que la industria de los combustibles fósiles pague para limpiar los desórdenes que ha provocado!

Esto es sólo un comienzo. Hará falta una lucha monumental para conseguir la justicia climática.

Pero la rebelión es inevitable. Ida es la tormenta de viento y lluvia que precede a la tormenta de protesta que se avecina. El reto es llevar las futuras olas de resistencia hasta su conclusión esencial: una revolución obrera para la abolición de la esclavitud asalariada capitalista.

Karl Marx y Friedrich Engels, escribiendo en 1848, dijeron que los trabajadores “tienen un mundo que ganar”.

El destino mismo de este mundo está en nuestras manos. □